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Q represents an amidino group, a cyano group or a group of formula XYN-, where

X and Y are the same or different, and each may represent a hydrogen atom, a lower alkyl group, or hetero-atom containing group or, together with the nitrogen atom to which they are attached, form a nitrogen-containing heterocyclic group;

R<sup>a</sup> represents a straight or branched chain alkylene or alkenylene group having from 1 to 6 carbon atoms and each optionally being substituted by from 1 to 4 alkyl groups each having from 1 to 3 carbon atoms;

R<sup>b</sup> and R<sup>c</sup> represents an alkylene or alkylidene group having 3 or 4 carbon atoms in a straight chain, each being optionally substituted by a 1 or 2 alkyl groups each having from 1 to 3 carbon atoms, the total number of carbon atoms in said straight chains of R<sup>b</sup> and R<sup>c</sup> being 7;

R<sup>2</sup> and R<sup>3</sup> are the same as or different from each other and each represents a hydrogen atom, or a group of formula R, RCO-, ROCO-, or RNHCO-, where

R represents a lower alkyl group or an aryl group, said alkyl or aryl group being optionally substituted by one or more of the substituents  $\alpha$ , defined below;

the chiral carbon atom indicated by the asterisk is in the L configuration;

Z is an aromatic amino acid residue;

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n is 0 or 1;

R<sup>1</sup> represents a hydrogen atom or a lower alkyl group or an aryl group, said alkyl or aryl group being optionally substituted by one or more of the substituents  $\alpha$ , defined below;

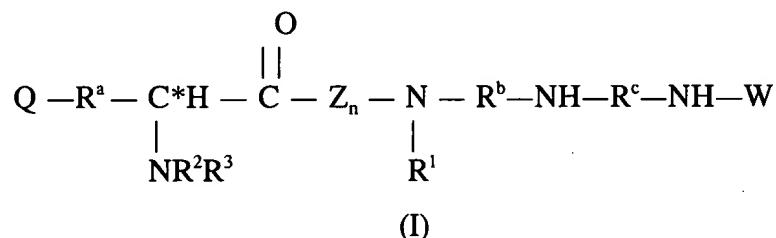
D<sub>1</sub> W represents a hydrogen atom or an alkyl or aryl group; and

substituents  $\alpha$  are selected from: halogen atoms, amino groups, alkylamino groups, dialkylamino groups, cyano groups, hydroxy groups, alkyl groups (except when the substituted group is alkyl), aryl groups, carbamoyl groups, alkylcarbamoyl groups, dialkylcarbamoyl groups and carboxy groups and esters thereof;

and pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof.

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19. A composition consisting essentially of a compound having the formula (I)



wherein:

Q represents an amidino group, a cyano group or a group of formula XYN-, where

X and Y are the same or different, and each may represent a hydrogen atom, a lower alkyl group, or hetero-atom containing group or, together with the

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nitrogen atom to which they are attached, form a nitrogen-containing heterocyclic group;

$R^a$  represents a straight or branched chain alkylene or alkenylene group having from 1 to 6 carbon atoms and each optionally being substituted by from 1 to 4 alkyl groups each having from 1 to 3 carbon atoms;

$R^b$  and  $R^c$  represents an alkylene or alkenylene group having 3 or 4 carbon atoms in a straight chain, each being optionally substituted by a 1 or 2 alkyl groups each having from 1 to 3 carbon atoms, the total number of carbon atoms in said straight chains of  $R^b$  and  $R^c$  being 7;

$R^2$  and  $R^3$  are the same as or different from each other and each represents a hydrogen atom, or a group of formula R,  $RCO^-$ ,  $ROCO^-$ , or  $RNHCO^-$ , where

$R$  represents a lower alkyl group or an aryl group, said alkyl or aryl group being optionally substituted by one or more of the substituents  $\alpha$ , defined below;

the chiral carbon atom indicated by the asterisk is in the L configuration;

Z is an aromatic amino acid residue;

n is 0 or 1;

$R^1$  represents a hydrogen atom or a lower alkyl group or an aryl group, said alkyl or aryl group being optionally substituted by one or more of the substituents  $\alpha$ , defined below;

W represents a hydrogen atom or an alkyl or aryl group; and

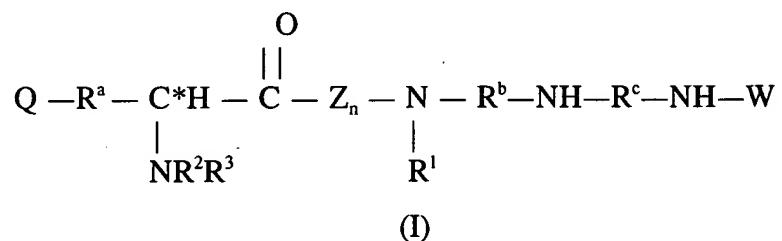
substituents  $\alpha$  are selected from: halogen atoms, amino groups, alkylamino groups, dialkylamino groups, cyano groups, hydroxy groups, alkyl groups (except when the substituted group is alkyl), aryl groups, carbamoyl groups, alkylcarbamoyl groups, dialkylcarbamoyl groups and carboxy groups and esters thereof;

and pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof;

the composition further comprising a level of contaminants that is non-toxic when the composition is administered to a patient in a quantity sufficient to provide a neuroprotective effect.

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23. A non-toxic composition consisting essentially of a compound having the formula (I)



wherein:

Q represents an amidino group, a cyano group or a group of formula XYN-, where

X and Y are the same or different, and each may represent a hydrogen atom, a lower alkyl group, or hetero-atom containing group or, together with the

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nitrogen atom to which they are attached, form a nitrogen-containing heterocyclic group;

$R^a$  represents a straight or branched chain alkylene or alkenylene group having from 1 to 6 carbon atoms and each optionally being substituted by from 1 to 4 alkyl groups each having from 1 to 3 carbon atoms;

$R^b$  and  $R^c$  represents an alkylene or alkylene group having 3 or 4 carbon atoms in a straight chain, each being optionally substituted by a 1 or 2 alkyl groups each having from 1 to 3 carbon atoms, the total number of carbon atoms in said straight chains of  $R^b$  and  $R^c$  being 7;

$D_3$   
 $R^2$  and  $R^3$  are the same as or different from each other and each represents a hydrogen atom, or a group of formula R,  $RCO^-$ ,  $ROCO^-$ , or  $RNHCO^-$ , where

R represents a lower alkyl group or an aryl group, said alkyl or aryl group being optionally substituted by one or more of the substituents  $\alpha$ , defined below;

the chiral carbon atom indicated by the asterisk is in the L configuration;

Z is an aromatic amino acid residue;

n is 0 or 1;

$R^1$  represents a hydrogen atom or a lower alkyl group or an aryl group, said alkyl or aryl group being optionally substituted by one or more of the substituents  $\alpha$ , defined below;

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W represents a hydrogen atom or an alkyl or aryl group; and

substituents  $\alpha$  are selected from: halogen atoms, amino groups, alkylamino groups, dialkylamino groups, cyano groups, hydroxy groups, alkyl groups (except when the substituted group is alkyl), aryl groups, carbamoyl groups, alkylcarbamoyl groups, dialkylcarbamoyl groups and carboxy groups and esters thereof;

*D<sub>3</sub>*  
and pharmaceutically acceptable salts thereof;

the composition further comprising a level of contaminants that is non-toxic when the composition is administered to a patient in a quantity sufficient to provide a neuroprotective effect.

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24. The composition of claim 23 which contains less than 0.1% of contaminants.